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how would it be possible for them to send an army 4000 miles to India? It will always be far easier for us to send an army from the banks of the Thames to the banks of the Indus than for the Russians to send an army from their frontier to Peshawur.

Sir H. RAWLINSON said this cotton question is really one of some consequence with regard to the Russian supply. There is no doubt that Russia draws the greater portion of her supply from Central Asia. M. Vámbéry had not touched upon the commercial part of the question; but it should be remembered that the real rivalry between us and Russia in Central Asia is in commerce, and not politics. At present, he gathered both from our own Trade Returns and from Mr. Lumley's Report on 'The Trade of Russia with Central Asia,' that we are entirely driven out of the market. M. Vámbéry would tell them that in Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarcand, he saw nothing but Russian goods. It is a peaceful and an honest rivalry, and as long as it is confined to that, we have no right to complain of Russia.

M. VÁMBÉRY confirmed this statement of Sir Henry Rawlinson, and added that he was informed that 8000 camels annually enter the different towns laden with Russian goods.

The PRESIDENT congratulated the Meeting upon the discussion, and expressed his concurrence in the opinion of Sir Henry Rawlinson that the advance of the Russians could not be in any way detrimental to our great Indian empire. He might remind his friends that long before we had any empire in the East, the Russians had intercourse with Bokhara. Surely, then, we could not be jealous of Russia trading with a nation that she had traded with for hundreds of years. So far as the subject had been touched upon, he thought it would do a great deal of good; as showing that both nations, by advancing their frontier and approximating to each other, only tended to civilise barbarous regions, and to bring savage nations under a regular system of government.\*

### 3. *On the Comoro Islands.* By Captain ALGERNON DE HORSEY, R.N.

THIS paper contains a description of the little-known group of islands called Comoro, lying between the northern end of Madagascar and the African coast. The largest of the group is only 35 miles in length by about 12 miles in breadth. It is remarkable as possessing a lofty isolated mountain, 8526 feet in height. Many interesting details, both of the physical geography and ethnology of the group, are given by Captain de Horsey, which it is unnecessary to repeat here, as his paper will be published entire in the 'Journal.'

\* M. Khanikoff has sent the following note, vindicating his claim to have visited and described Samarcand long before M. Vámbéry's journey:—

"I arrived at Samarcand the 2nd (14th) of September, 1841, and remained there up to the 20th of the month. My travelling companion, the late naturalist Lehmann, arrived two days after me, and remained there for three weeks. We have both published very full descriptions of the capital of Tamerlane, and I also caused an exact plan of the place to be drawn up by the topographer Yakowlef, who accompanied me. This plan, on the scale of 1 verst (3500 English feet) to an inch, is annexed to my description of the Khanat of Bokhara, translated into English by M. de Bode. The English editor, it is true, would not go to the expense of reproducing the plans and maps; but the Russian edition, in which they appear, is to be found in the British Museum library. The description of Samarcand, drawn up by M. Lehmann, was published in German, by Messrs. v. Baer and v. Helmersen, after the death of the author, in the 'Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Russischen Reiches,' Vol. 17."